

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Mate selection and marriage exchanges as reflections of the social structure—social and psychological aspects of nuptial rites—the handling of the themes of sex and concubinage, of barrenness and premature death in the marriage situation.

FROM mummeries and masks we turn to marriage and *munywalo* (bride-price). The secrecy of the *digama* contrasts strangely with the publicity of marriage ceremonial; but they are both cultural devices for dealing with cultural problems. The hidden forces in nature and man are intractable and can be brought under control only by rephrasing them as mysteries, the fear of which is overcome by man-made initiations and cults. Marriage is also an initiation, but its complicated ceremonial is concerned chiefly with laying the concrete foundations of the social structure. This is a gigantic and delicate task, almost beyond the capacity of the culture. Fortunately, we can see more clearly than in the case of the *digama* how this task has been accomplished, but unfortunately we shall have space merely to glance at the larger features instead of examining closely the exquisite workmanship and superlative ornamentation.

It is not easy to appreciate the immense implications of marriage among the Lovedu. For one thing, the concomitant cattle exchanges transform it into something wholly unlike the contract between two individuals of different sex among us. The fact that a Lovedu woman may, just like a man, marry a wife, warns us that we are in a world entirely different from our own. The elaborate ceremonial reflects the enormous importance of marriage and of the network of links that are forged by the cattle that pass. The bonds that are created in this manner can be put to all manner of uses. They form the basis of the *munywalo* ring of exchanges. They hold together the political system, incorporating as they do foreign elements in the tribe, and casting the net of relationship over the whole country. Marriage and *munywalo* provide the pattern even for dealing with homicide: the murder is not avenged; by handing over cattle or by giving his daughter, the murderer and his relatives become enmeshed in the network of exchanges; he is transformed from criminal to kinsman and a potential blood feud is turned into the reciprocal relations between the people of the bride and those of the groom. A man threatened with starvation when his crops have failed and his cattle have died can, by linking himself to the *munywalo* ring of another, save both himself and his family.

But the most startling proof of the importance of Lovedu marriage lies therein that the tribunals of the *Abw*—in other words, the organization that corresponds to our legal system—are mainly concerned with marriage and *munywalo* tangles; the *raison d'être* of the *Abw* and its law appear to be the preservation of the marriage system. The whole genius of *Abw* law and of *Abw* judicial proceedings is the genius of resolving tensions within the gigantic superstructure built upon marriage and its

● 581 associated institutions. In these circumstances, it is patently absurd for
 182 us to orientate ourselves as if marriage affects only personal relationships
 672 between two individuals. To regard marriage as primarily a sexual
 partnership or even as an institution for promoting the procreation and
 rearing of children is to misunderstand completely its great role in the
 social organization.

581 As the main function of marriage is to create and perpetuate alliances
 582 between groups of people, sexual or temperamental compatibility
 between the prospective spouses is not regarded as an ideal. Emphasis on
 romantic love, and pre-marital sexual experimentation, with a view to
 testing out compatibility, would be incongruous with the prevailing type
 of marriage. Mate selection in its ideal form is socially regulated, and
 the ideal form is the basic pattern of all marriages. The social organiza-
 tion determines whom one shall marry, and the parents, not the in-
 dividuals concerned, set the machinery of the organization into motion.
 The ideal marriage is marriage of a man with his mother's brother's
 daughter or of a woman with her father's sister's son. This does not
 mean that all cross-cousins are preferred mates. It is, for instance, con-
 sidered irregular for a man to marry his father's sister's daughter; that
 cases of such marriages are found should not surprise us. There are
 irregularities in every sphere of culture, and the rules of mate selection
 are particularly liable to be upset because of the complex interrelations
 that arise in the social system. The fundamental rule is that a man must
 marry, not the daughter of any brother of his mother, but the daughter
 of that brother who has used his mother's marriage cattle to obtain a
 wife for himself. His mother and his mother's brother are cattle-linked
 sister and brother because, when she married, the cattle that came in
 were handed to the brother for obtaining a wife: the cattle of the sister
 are said to 'build a hut for her brother'. We may thus say that a man must
 marry a daughter of his cattle-linked maternal uncle, and we may call her
 his 'cattle-linked cross-cousin'.

But the Lovedu phrase the matter rather differently and more sig-
 nificantly. They say that the sister has 'built the house of her brother'
 (the cattle-linked brother), that therefore she 'has a gate' by which she
 may enter his house, this gate being 'the gate which the cattle seek', and
 that it is her right to demand from the 'house built by her cattle' a
 daughter who must come to her as her daughter-in-law to stamp and
 cook for her. Note that the right is not phrased as the right of her son to
 obtain his wife from that house; note further that the right is in respect
 of the house—that is, of the wife of the cattle-linked brother, not in
 respect of the brother. That wife is the *mwiyi* (returner) of the sister,
 the person who is obliged to return her daughter to the place whence the
 cattle came; and it does not matter if in the house of the sister there is no
 son to marry this daughter. The *mwiyi* must send her daughter if
 requested, and, if cattle are offered, to be the daughter-in-law of her
 husband's cattle-linked sister, whether that sister has a son or not; for
 it is the sister's right to be served and helped, especially in her old age,
 by the daughter of the house which she has established. The ideal is
 that a girl should not be married to her father's sister's husband or, in

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other words, that a man should not marry his wife's brother's daughter. But one finds a suggestive number of cases of this marriage and, what is noteworthy is that even to-day a girl still jokingly calls her father's sister's husband *masana* (husband) and, it is said, not long ago regularly called him 'husband', while the girl's own husband was 'child' (*gyana*) to her. These vestiges may reflect a rather different system, not unknown in tribes further north which Lovedu *manywalo* arrangements have reshaped.

The sister may, as we have said, demand that her cattle-linked brother send his daughter either to be the wife of her son or, if she has no son, to be her daughter-in-law and, in the latter case, the sister 'marries' her cattle-linked brother's daughter on behalf of a supposititious son. If the demand is not acceded to, whether the reason be that the daughter refuses to go or her parents refuse to fulfil their obligation, the results may be disastrous. The sister (or her husband) may 'pull down the house she built at her brother's' by taking back her cattle, and she may give them to some one else who will establish a house that is prepared to fulfil its obligations; or, if the cattle have already passed on, in the chain of exchanges, from the wife of the cattle-linked brother to that wife's brother or, further still, the 'roots of the cattle' may be 'followed', perhaps involving the snapping of the chain at several points. The whole system of interrelations created by the cattle may, in such a case, be thrown out of gear and the repercussions may be so widespread that the whole country is said 'to be spoilt'. There are, however, many safety devices and the genius for effecting compromises ensures the isolation of the stresses and strains to manageable limits.

The ideal form of marriage, that of a man with his cattle-linked cross-cousin, turns out to be an inevitable consequence of the whole social system, the ground pattern of which is determined by kinship obligations though the detailed arrangements are regulated by the cattle-linking exchanges. It is conceived of not so much as a cross-cousin marriage as of a niece performing an obligation towards her cattle-linked aunt. The conception of a marriage is not wholly submerged, but it stands out far less boldly than the conception of the duty of a niece to love, cherish, and obey her cattle-linked aunt. The central feature, the pivot upon which the whole system is conceived to turn, is the passing of the cattle from a sister, by whose marriage they come in, to her uterine brother, to be used by him for the purpose of acquiring a wife; and from the wife of the brother they pass on to her uterine brother and so on *ad infinitum*. Brother and sister of the same house are cattle-linked, but each is also linked to a partner by the marriage validated by the cattle. The sister-brother cattle link and the husband-wife marriage-plus-cattle link form a continuous chain from sister to brother to wife of brother to brother to wife of brother and so on, which is doubled and redoubled in the second generation, when the same interlinking takes place and the son of the sister marries the daughter of the brother, the brother receiving cattle and the sister a daughter-in-law, while the son of the brother marries the daughter of the brother of his wife. It will be noticed that the three essential links are those between brother and

581 sister, between husband and wife and between cattle-linked cross-cousins,
 582 and these links, as well as the whole network of subsidiary links, arise from the implications of marriage and cattle-linking. The brothers who receive the cattle from the sisters return daughters to them and again receive cattle; the brothers become the nucleus of a group providing brides, and hence, from the point of view of the sisters and their children, they are the brides or parents-in-law (*vamakhulu*), while the sister's husbands are, from the point of view of the brothers and their children, the group supplying bridegrooms (*vatsani*) or sons-in-law (*vaguhulu*). The *vamakhulu* give brides and receive cattle; the *vaguhulu* give cattle and receive brides.

582 That is the complex network in which cross-cousin marriage is enmeshed. Cattle-linked cross-cousins are said to be 'born for' one another; a man is said to marry where his father has married, a woman is said to go to her father's sister (thus marrying where the latter has married). Actually over 60 per cent. of the men marry the cattle-linked cross-cousin 'born for them'; and she, whether married first or last, becomes the chief wife. This means that she bears the chief son. It may happen that she is not married at all during the lifetime of the man she was 'born for'; she may be too young or he may die prematurely; yet she will be the wife who must, for any important purpose, bear the chief son. If the husband
 588 'born for her' has died or never comes into existence, and a successor to him is required in any position of importance, such as headship of a district, she will nevertheless be married to him; the cattle will pass and he who 'enters' will be some one else, chosen not by her, but by the group of the bridegrooms or, more precisely, the house of the non-existent bridegroom (which in practice more often than not means the mistress of that house). Of course, the system is not inflexible. When nothing of importance as regards status or position is at stake or, if the girl is headstrong and refuses to allow the chosen one to enter, she may 'pick up children in the bush'. But she has no right to marry any one else, though sometimes she is inherited by the brother of her supposititious spouse as if she were a widow; sometimes she merely goes to cook for her cattle-linked aunt and there bears children as if she were the chief wife of that aunt's son.

It is only a step from this situation to the further elaboration that allows a woman to marry a wife, not for her son, but for herself. If the system logically implies that a woman may have in her service a husbandless daughter-in-law doing all the work of a wife, by a slight extension of this conception she may actually marry a wife. There is ample precedent for this elaboration in the fact that the queen has wives; she is their 'husband' and to the children of her wives she is 'father' (*vubabe*). This model is followed by other women, especially women of importance and women who, as doctors and potters, have cattle of their own with which to obtain wives. In general, however, such women call their wife 'daughter-in-law', as though they had been married, not for themselves, but on behalf of a son.

582 It is not only these peculiar elaborations that result from the pivotal institutions of cattle-linked brother and sister and 'being born' for one

583 There are scores of aspects we cannot even touch upon. There are rules as to the kind of cattle or other beasts that may properly be used as *munywalo*: the rules may seem curious to us, but they have their reason in social and other arrangements. The number seven is taboo, for the seventh finger, 'points', as does a witch when he says, 'You'll see,' and it is wrong so to point at one's in-laws, with whom co-operation is essential. Similarly, as the size of the testicles of full-grown male animals is an insult, because it is a challenge, such uncastrated animals cannot be part of the *munywalo*. So also yellowish cattle presage jealousies between co-wives; they will cause the bride to run away. Marriage is patrilocal, otherwise a man is said 'to have been married by his wife'; it is good to live near, but not too near, one's wife's people; for, if proximity is an economic and social advantage, to live under the roof of the parents-in-law is to relinquish all authority in one's own home. Generally speaking, the bride's family do not call the bridegroom to help them with actual work, such as building huts or ploughing. But the idea of service instead of, or in addition to, *munywalo* is faintly reflected in the fact that men now still living were required towards the end of the ceremonial to build a hut for their parents-in-law. The rule was that, when a bridegroom had completed the hut, he climbed to the roof and refused to come down until the bride was immediately released to go home with him and she by greeting (*hu lisha*) signified her willingness to come. Such a hut in case of divorce counted as one head of cattle. And perhaps we should add, though it is clearly implied in all we have said, that no one except the boy's parents contributes and no one except the house of the girl's mother receives the *munywalo*. More than that, a man cannot help the son of one house by taking the cattle of another, for it is said, 'One house cannot eat the property of another,' though this, as everything else, is subject to the supreme principle that 'if they agree', the rigidity of the rule may be relaxed. It may involve difficult readjustments, but agreement is conceived as being able to overcome the difficulties. Sometimes also a relative who has brought up the bride is given one of the beasts of her *munywalo*, but it is not a custom as in many tribes, it is merely a matter of agreement.

581 The sexual aspect of marriage is treated with great moderation. Among us, where love looms large and represents a romantic ideal when we are young, it more often than not ends in disillusionment when we are old. The structure of Lovedu society lays no stress upon sexual compatibility, and marriage almost completely ignores sexual adjustments. Co-operation and agreement as regards its main purposes, both economic and structural, not companionship of husband and wife, is the ideal. Agreement is the watchword of the society, the guarantee of harmonious relations between spouses as well as co-wives. In describing the possible relations and dispositions within the family, no phrase is more frequently used than the phrase, 'if they agree'. No custom, no rule, no arrangement, decreed by the laws of the family, are absolute; and because the *khoro* judicial proceedings deal with difficulties in the family and in the social structure, they also are guided and controlled by agreement and compromises. And so it is agreement, not sexual compatibility, which is the

foundation of happy marriage. It is an attitude inculcated by the immense marriage ceremonial, and it must be understood in its total complex within the social structure. Sexual adventures and compatibilities may be sought outside the marriage relationships. And so we have the *mulavu* institution, a realistic concession to the impossibility of completely conditioning so primeval a force as sexual attraction to the purposes of the social structure; it also meets the difficulty of the long suckling period. As might be expected, it is married rather than unmarried people who have their lovers (*vaglavu*). Nevertheless, a European finds it difficult to understand that old women so frequently have liaisons with young married men and that these men so frequently seek their adventures with women who might well be their mothers or grandmothers. But in the Lovedu system it is not unnatural that our preferences and our conceptions of sexual attraction should as often as not be completely reversed. 581

The ideal for girlhood is chastity, but the society is rather impatient of both men and women who spy upon the love affairs of their spouses. These affairs are not matters to be talked about; but, on the other hand, despite the mocking songs sung on special occasions (the *oyali*) about deflowered girls, the society has a humane outlook towards what we call illegitimacy. Unmarried girls among pagans rarely have illegitimate children; this is more frequent among Christians. The seducer is fined twice as much as in the case of adultery with a married woman, yet only one-third the amount that is customary among Shangana-Tonga. The fine is certainly not the main deterrent; nor is the disgrace of the girl. She maintains her position in society; she is congratulated by friends and relatives; even the queen herself may, as we have seen, pay a visit to see and praise the infant. The girl has been 'spoilt', but she proudly displays her baby. She will not have offers of marriage from young men, but older men are wiser. Great blame falls upon the guilty man. It is a curious mixture of values, for there is no doubt that virginity in a girl is highly esteemed. In the marriage ceremonial, as we have seen, virginity entitles both the bride's mother and herself to special rewards. There is even a symbolical reference to it in the calabash that the bride used to take with her to her husband's home: if it was whole, it occasioned joy and was proudly worn by her younger sister; if not, the girl's people had to make amends with beer. 831 848 84

New values and sensitiveness to-day insist that the absence of chastity be concealed, not that its presence be publicly applauded or rewarded. Girls are still examined, especially at the *khoba*, but the matter is private; and the public display of a calabash has fallen into disuse. Yet the sins of the girl-mother are not visited on the innocent infant; it remains a thing of joy to every one. Abortions are said to be common, but the only evidence adduced is the high incidence of lung diseases (*gerv* or *vulwede oyo nasadi*). A man gets *gerv* from intercourse with a woman who has had an abortion; it is not merely the most dreaded of all diseases, a death from *gerv* may prevent rain, and men are again and again in their lives warned against promiscuously consorting with women. 831 848 847 753

Sexual compatibility between husband and wife is a minor matter. 593

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is not primarily conceived of as raising seed; his main duty is to care for her and to maintain intact the *munywalo* scheme. 587 768

The economic aspect of marriage is more important than the sexual. 593
The duty of a niece to marry at her cattle-linked aunt's is phrased as an economic obligation. A wife has power because she is the provider of food. There are many other sources of the influence of an old woman, both over her son and her son's wife, and they have economic implications. Nagambi, a man of thirty-five, scorned to bow to his wife's wishes except when she was possessed; yet the wishes of his mother dictated when he should go to town or return home, what land he should plough and when, what medicines or doctors he should get for his baby. The apparent helplessness of women when a stranger calls and asks for information or wishes to do business is not wholly assumed, for theoretically business and politics are the affairs of the men; but often enough it is convenient to defer to the men and to exercise a woman's influence behind the scenes. Thrift and industry are the virtues valued in a wife; it is the hard-working girl who is coveted as a bride. For that reason also, a faithful concubine (*mugaula*) has in practice a high status. 581 595

Madume's brother had both a wife and a *mugaula*, and when he died the *mugaula* took all his property for her son. Madume, who denied her right to do this, brought an action and the case eventually came to the capital. The court wholly ignored the issue as to whether a *mugaula* had legal rights. It contented itself with urging the *mugaula* to give Madume control of the assets which had accrued from the work of his brother's son, warning Madume not to press his case. 'Did not the *mugaula* cook and work long for your brother?' it asked. 'And was it not due to her thrift that there are goods? You are wrong to worry her.' Unions with concubines are often stable and economically satisfactory. Quarrels, even jealousies, between a man and his *mugaula* sometimes come before the courts, just as if they were disturbances within a family. Muhale complained, not that his son was living with a *mugaula*, but that the *mugaula*'s laziness had prevented him from giving a beer-drink for a whole year. When the jealousy of the *mugaula* threatened domestic trouble, the queen considered the matter important enough to send a messenger, who, with the district head, came to settle the dispute; the court dealt with the matter exactly as if the parties were married, urging mutual forbearance and co-operation. A man who illicitly lives upon a woman, eating from her porridge bowls (*madilo*), acquires no rights over her or her children, and is derisively called 'father of the porridge bowls' (*ramadilo*). 595 578

Instead of attempting to deal with the conflicts and tangles in *munywalo* and marriage, we shall refer to a few of their aspects merely. The conditioning of cross-cousins for their obligations as marital partners does not eliminate temperamental differences, and in modern conditions, which emphasize individual acquisitiveness as against reciprocity, the burden of obligations in the *munywalo* ring becomes too heavy. A father, more intent upon the polygynous circle of huts than upon maintaining the chain of *munywalo* exchanges, may use the cattle coming in from his daughter's marriage to acquire a wife for himself; and an almost 578

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431 I want a wife to come and stamp for me', said the queen. The
 583 girl was married by the queen and shortly after was given to
 613 the son of another 'wife' (*motanoni*) of the queen with whom
 571 she is now living at the Capital.

437 Sometimes the transaction takes on more of an economic
 583 character, a man pledging his daughter in order to receive
 economic help. Thus Jim's father in a period of starvation took
 his ten-year-old daughter to a man at Malemacha and said,
 'I am starving and poor. Give me money. I have a girl, a
ledolo'. Money was given to him and later when the girl was
 sent in marriage, cattle were handed over in the usual way.
 More commonly this technique was used when a man had no
 sister whose cattle he might use to marry with. He then went
 to a maternal or affinal relative or to a friend or even a stranger
 who had cattle, saying: '*Ge no khuru*—I have a knee', in reference
 to his procreative powers, thus pledging himself to send an as
 yet unborn daughter in marriage. Today such transactions
 have become infrequent since money can so easily be obtained
 by migrant labour or a loan can be repaid in money without
 having to pledge a daughter.

175 The cattle or other property (marriage hoes were used in the
 437 old days)¹ establish tangible obligations between the two
 583 families which can be upheld at law even though the contract
 is fulfilled only in the next generation or later. Moreover the
 bond is permanent: other marriages will follow the first from
 generation to generation in a manner that will be described
 1512 below. The use of women in property transactions of this kind
 which is not considered to be derogatory by the Lobedu is all
 the more remarkable in the light of the very high position of,
 and the power wielded by, women in Lobedu social life.

Some Aspects of Marriage

- 581 It will be necessary before discussing the domestic cycle to
 examine briefly the nature of Lobedu marriage; for not only
 does marriage establish strong economic and social relation-

¹ These hoes were too large and heavy for tilling the soil and were merely kept
 1545 in a hut. The chief councillor of the queen, a man of about eighty years old, still
 remembers the use of marriage hoes in a few cases in his boyhood. Six hoes or
 eight head of cattle passed in marriage at that time.

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ships between the families involved but upon it rests the whole ⁵⁸¹ character of the domestic group. Payment of bride-price transfers the reproductive powers of the woman to the husband's ⁵⁸¹ agnatic group. The husband has genetrical as well as uxorial ⁵⁸³ rights. Genetrical rights apply not only to any children born ⁵⁸⁵ after the marriage whoever their biological father might be, but also in retrospect, so that any child born before marriage automatically becomes the child of whoever pays the bride-price, with full rights of succession and inheritance from its sociological father. There is thus, in contrast to other tribes such as the Zulu, no way in which a Lovedu man can obtain the right to his biological child other than by marrying its mother. Emphasis on sociological as opposed to biological fatherhood among the Lovedu is very strong and this is an important factor in Lovedu social structure. The rights of a father to a child involve control over it; the right to the bride-price of a daughter (subject to the right of her brother to marry with his sister's cattle and of her mother to the services of the woman married with her daughter's bride-price); and corresponding to his right to his daughter's bride-price the duty to help his son to marry. A father may and often does marry an ⁵⁹⁵ additional wife with his daughter's bride-price. A father also has the right to be cared for in his old age by his sons.

The levirate is practised, the junior levirate being more ⁵⁸⁷ common than the senior levirate. The brother raises seed to ⁵⁸⁷ the deceased and takes over the responsibility of a father and husband though the children he begets are counted as belonging to his deceased brother. Frequently the heir, eldest son of the chief 'house' inherits a young wife of his father. In this case, similarly, the children born of the union are looked upon as the deceased's, i.e., as brothers and sisters of the heir, not his children. The sororate also is practised in all its forms, sororal ⁵⁹⁵ polygyny being very common. Where a sister is sent to 'awaken the house (*ho dsosa nde*)' of a barren or deceased wife full bride-price is due for her although, since bride-price is never an absolutely fixed amount, less may be asked for than in the first marriage.

The marriage of a woman transfers to her husband's group ⁵⁹¹ the right to her labour. Initially it is the husband's mother ⁵⁹² even more than the husband himself that benefits, as we shall

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- 581/sec. But the fruits of her labour go to swell the property only
602 of that unit of the lineage which constitutes the wife's own
'house', the independence and rights of which must be respected
even by the husband.

583 Bride-price generally consists of some five to eight head of
cattle, a number of goats and money (to the extent of at least £5).
Today people sometimes pay a sum of money instead of cattle—

[437] £40 in a recent marriage. This represents eight head of cattle,
bride-price cattle having been regarded as equivalent to £5
each, irrespectively of market prices, for the past fifty years at

581 least. The amount given is, however, never a fixed one as the
602 passing of bride-price initiates a continuous relationship of gift
437 exchange between the two families concerned and the marriage

puts the bridegroom under a lifelong obligation to extend
economic help to his wife's people. '*Monoko a o fede*—bride-
price is never completed', it is said. When the wife's people
have to pay a fine, if they need cattle or goats for the marriage
of a son, they will approach their *isetse* (or *muduhulu*)—son-in-law.
The man who has provided a wife has given something 'bigger
than cattle' and is in this sense in a superior position. On the
other hand the son-in-law (*muduhulu*) or wife-receiver is
accorded great honour by his wife's people and once a year at
least receives a gift of beer and grain. The relationship is one of
reciprocity and the son-in-law must for his part also show
respect for his wife's people. He must ever be ready to grant

[114] their requests and may never refuse. There is no evidence for
Leach's suggestion that the Lobedu have a 'kind of Kachin
structure in reverse' with a 'strong tendency for the wife-

[572] receiving group to rank the higher'.¹ In endogamous unions
in the Lobedu royal group both husband and wife may be

[516] members of the same lineage. Lobedu society is, moreover, not
a stratified society though the royal lineage enjoys great
prestige.

582 Fully to understand Lobedu marriage one must approach

583 it also from the point of view of the woman. Usually a uterine

604 brother marries a wife with the cattle that have accrued from
his sister's marriage. This sometimes happens in other tribes
too. But where the Lobedu situation seems to be distinctive is
that every woman whose marriage-cattle have been used to

¹ Leach, 1931.

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asked about this the reply was not as I expected it to be, that 583
 Andrew's daughters were attending school and would be 588
 averse to such a marriage but 'we just gave Kewele to Maseriba
 because she is *khadi* (i.e., sister in a ritual sense) and "to knit
 together the family" (*ho ruks lelolo*)'. This desire to keep alive 582
 the links between brother and sister and to maintain and 581
 renew marriage links with women of the lineage from one
 generation to another is very strong. The marriage of a woman
 at her father's sister's (i.e., mother's brother's daughter
 marriage) is called '*ho dsosa moloko*'—to awaken or renew
 relationship.

There are several variations of mother's brother's daughter 582
 marriage that arise from or are bound up with obligations con- 583
 nected with cattle that have passed. If in the case of cattle-
 linked brother and sister (D and C in Figure 2a), the latter has
 a daughter but no son who could marry her brother's daughter,
 she might, rather than break the link with her brother and
 allow her husband to use the cattle to create new links with
 strangers, nevertheless, with the agreement and consent of her
 husband, hand over her daughter E's bride-price to her
 brother D so that he can marry a second wife and establish a
 'house' from which her daughter E may claim a woman later
 to marry her son and to 'come and cook for her'. Here marriage
 (of F to G) is with the mother's mother's brother's daughter.
 When such girl is actually married bride-price will again pass.
 If, in such a marriage, the woman were to run away or if there 586
 were a divorce, both bride-prices could be claimed, as we saw
 in the 1930's. Today, however, probably as a result of European
 administrative policy, only one bride-price is paid back, though
 it is commonly known that both used to be returned.

Besides marriage with the mother's mother's brother's 582
 daughter, other variations of mother's brother's daughter
 marriage are found, such as marriage with the mother's
 brother's son's daughter (one generation below), with the
 father's mother's brother's daughter or even with a father's
 mother's brother's son's daughter.

The fact that in the above example of marriage with the 58
 mother's mother's brother's daughter two lots of bride-price 602
 are handed over yet only one bride is received, indicates that
 the economic aspect is not paramount; it is the permanent link

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592 its males is counter-balanced by a 'knitting' together of the
 593 men with their sisters who have married out and a strengthening
 603 of their ties with their maternal kin by means of preferential
 [59] marriage supported by cattle links. This process is illustrated
 in Figure 9.

582 The proportion of mother's brother's daughter marriages in
 its various forms to the total number of marriages among two
 generations of members of a large lineage which was analysed
 in detail (counting the marriage of each woman in a polygynous
 union as a separate marriage) was 34 per cent, of which
 91 per cent were marriages with the mother's uterine brother
 and its derivations. If married men were to be considered,
 the proportion would be higher, 63 per cent of the married
 men having contracted at least one mother's brother's daughter
 marriage; 80 per cent of these were (or were based on) marriage
 with the mother's uterine brother's daughter. This tallies with
 a random sample of 100 cases taken in 1936 in the royal area
 (excluding the Capital itself) in which 67 per cent of the married
 men were found to have married a mother's brother's daughter.

582 But the situation had materially altered by 1962 when a similar
 178 sample of 243 cases in the same area showed mother's brother's
 daughter marriages to have decreased from 67 per cent to
 34 per cent. Of these 94 per cent were with the mother's
 uterine brother or his descendants, which indicates that despite
 strong forces making for change and increased opportunities
 for contacts with strangers of the opposite sex which have
 greatly diminished marriage with distant maternal kin, the
 values attached to 'knitting' together close relatives are still

[17] strong. The most potent forces at work for breaking down
 preferential marriage are Christianity, which condemns it and
 school education which by inculcating Western values makes
 preferential marriage unthinkable to any school child today
 however short a period he has spent at school.

581 That men consciously use marriage to keep alive family
 582 relationships and that they are deeply concerned about these
 602 alliances, can be seen from the case of Modidi (M) in Figure 7.

M's homestead abutted on that of V, whose half-sister K he
 had married (see Figure 7). When they were both old. M took
 his granddaughter L, (his son by V's half-sister K having died
 years before) to his friend V saying, 'I see we are in danger of

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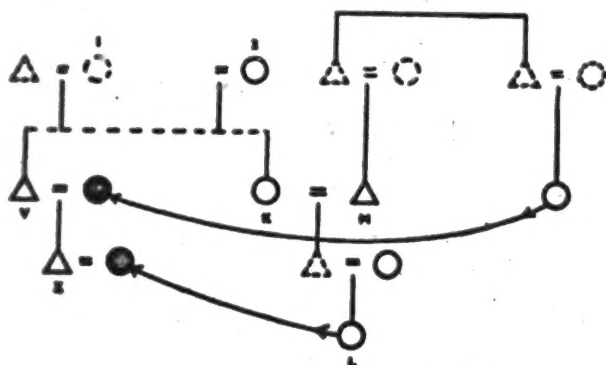
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FIG. 7. An arranged marriage (Z to L) to 'knit together' the families of two affines.

growing apart (separating). Here is my son's daughter. Let us knit together the family (*ruka lelako*) else soon we shall be lost to one another'. So Z, the son of V, married L, M's granddaughter. It is interesting to note that while M had married V's half-sister, V had also married a 'sister' of M (M's father's brother's daughter), a case of 'brother-sister' exchange which is very rare among the Lobedu. Z was thus marrying his mother's 'brother's' son's daughter, who was at the same time also his father's half-sister's son's daughter.

Marriage from generation to generation with the uterine brother's daughter has important consequences for ancestor worship. It leads to a merging of ancestors on the father's and mother's sides so that they become *moloko o motes*—one lineage, as the Lobedu phrase it, with identical ancestors in at least two of the four grandparents' families. If a diviner diagnoses an illness as due to someone in a man's father's mother's lineage (which in the case of two generations of mother's brother's daughter marriages will be the same as the mother's father's lineage), then a man's mother, or even his wife, could officiate in a beer-offering in his homestead to the ancestors concerned. The Lobedu call upon and give offerings on different occasions to all four grandparents and other deceased members of their lineages. It is interesting to note that the mother's mother who never becomes by virtue of preferential marriage an ancestor common to both sides of the family and might thus be in danger of being left out, makes herself very much felt in practice. She